6/25/07 (3)

TOWN OF ACTON
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Acton, Massachusetts 01720
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Planning Department

May 25, 2007

Notice of Public Hearing

Please publish the following as a LEGAL NOTICE on ***June 7, 2007*** and ***June 14, 2007***.

TOWN OF ACTON
NOTICE OF HEARING

The Acton Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on June 25, 2007 at 7:45 PM in the Francis Faulkner Room, Town Hall to continue its review of conceptual designs for the crossing of the Assabet River Rail Trail over the MBTA commuter rail line in South Acton; and to receive additional public comments.

F. Dore' Hunter
Andrew D. Magee
Lauren S. Rosenzweig
Paulina Knibbe
Peter Berry
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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BSC GROUP

Memorandum

To:	Roland Bartl, AICP Town of Acton	Date:	June 20, 2007
From:	Jef Fasser, RLA, AICP BSC Group	Proj. No:	**61041.01**
Re:	Town of Acton - Analysis of Ramp Options to Connect the ARRT Bikeway to a Proposed Bridge and the MBTA Lot		

cc:

33 Waldo Street
Worcester, MA 01608

Tel: 508-792-4500

Fax: 508-792-4509

On Monday, June 25, 2007, the BSC Group will be presenting to the public additional information regarding options for connecting the ARRT bike trail from Maple Street over the MBTA rail lines by means of a new pre-fabricated bridge and then down to the MBTA station. The information to be presented on Monday will include before-and-after photo images of the proposed bridge as well as ramp options to get to and from the proposed bridge as described below.

Following is a description of the ramp options, which are attached to this memo.

TRAIL RAMP OPTIONS

South Ramp

This option shows a proposed trail alignment from the end of the current rail bed up to Maple Street, crossing Maple Street then onto the proposed pre-fabricated bridge over the MBTA rail lines. As was suggested at the previous public meeting, this alignment attempts to tuck the trail into the embankment in this area to minimize its visual impact and need for retaining walls. We feel this alignment meets these criteria as best as possible considering the physical, environmental and property ownership constraints in this area.

- This alignment stays within the bounds of property owned either by the town or state, therefore avoiding any private property acquisitions.
- The ramped trail is at a slope of 5%, therefore no intermediate landings are needed.
- There is only one "switch-back", but we feel this if unavoidable on this site.
- Once the trail ramps-up from the end of the rail trail to Maple Street, the street crossing is located 130 feet west of Main Street, not at the Main Street intersection. At the last meeting, there was a lot if discussion about the location of this Maple Street crossing, as some felt it should be located at the Main/Maple intersection. Much more study will be needed to evaluate sight lines and sight distances at any crossing location. However, there has been concern that if the crossing is at the Maple/Main intersection, there is not adequate sight distance to the intersection from vehicles traveling across the bridge to the south entering Maple Street. In addition, the Massachusetts Highway Department has recommended a similar crossing treatment associated with the Bruce Freeman trail. If the trail were to cross at the Main/Maple intersection, then another

switchback would be needed and additional walls may re required to bring the trail along the southern edge of Maple Street up to Main Street before making the crossing.

North Ramp

The north ramp will connect the pre-fabricated bridge down the embankment to the informal parking area at the bottom of Railroad Street, which then connects to a walkway to the MBTA station. At the last public meeting, there were comments about the visual impact of a ramp system down this slope, the need to minimize switch-backs along a ramp system, the need to minimize the loss of any parking spaces in this area, the possibility of having a raised ramp over the parking area and the possibility of connecting this access across private property to Railroad Street.

We did explore the possibility of connecting across the private property to Railroad Street. The change in grade would most likely require a ramped system with intermediate landings, possibly a switchback and would greatly impact the recent improvements to this property. It was determined that this was not a preferred solution.

Other ramp options were explored to stay on state and town owned land as described below.

North Ramp – Option A

This option shows a ramp from the end of the proposed pre-fabricated bike bridge adjacent to the Maple Street sidewalk down to the blue building. A landing there would allow access to the current sidewalk to the right and also provide a connection to a ramp system to the left with switchbacks in the embankment down to the informal parking lot. To meet existing grades at the parking lot and still allow for the current safety and maintenance access to the MBTA rail lines, the ramp would need to decrease at a slope of 8% (for handicap accessibility) with intermediate landings. Such a ramp system would require retaining walls to place it into the embankment and railings for handicap accessibility.

- The option still allows MBTA access to the rail lines.
- Once the ramp systems exits onto the parking lot, a striped lane would demark a bike lane to the existing path leading to the MBTA station.
- Perpendicular parking located along the southern edge of the parking lot would need to be moved to the north edge of the parking lot.
- 7 Parallel parking spaces would be lost.

North Ramp – Option B

As with Option A, this option shows a ramp from the end of the proposed pre-fabricated bike bridge adjacent to the Maple Street sidewalk down to the blue building. From this point, there would be a ramp system with switchbacks in the embankment down to the parking lot. However, a portion of the parking lot would be rebuilt to tilt it up to meet the ramp. This allows the ramp to end on the northern edge of the parking lot, but a low retaining wall would be required along the southern edge of the parking lot to support the elevation of the parking lot.

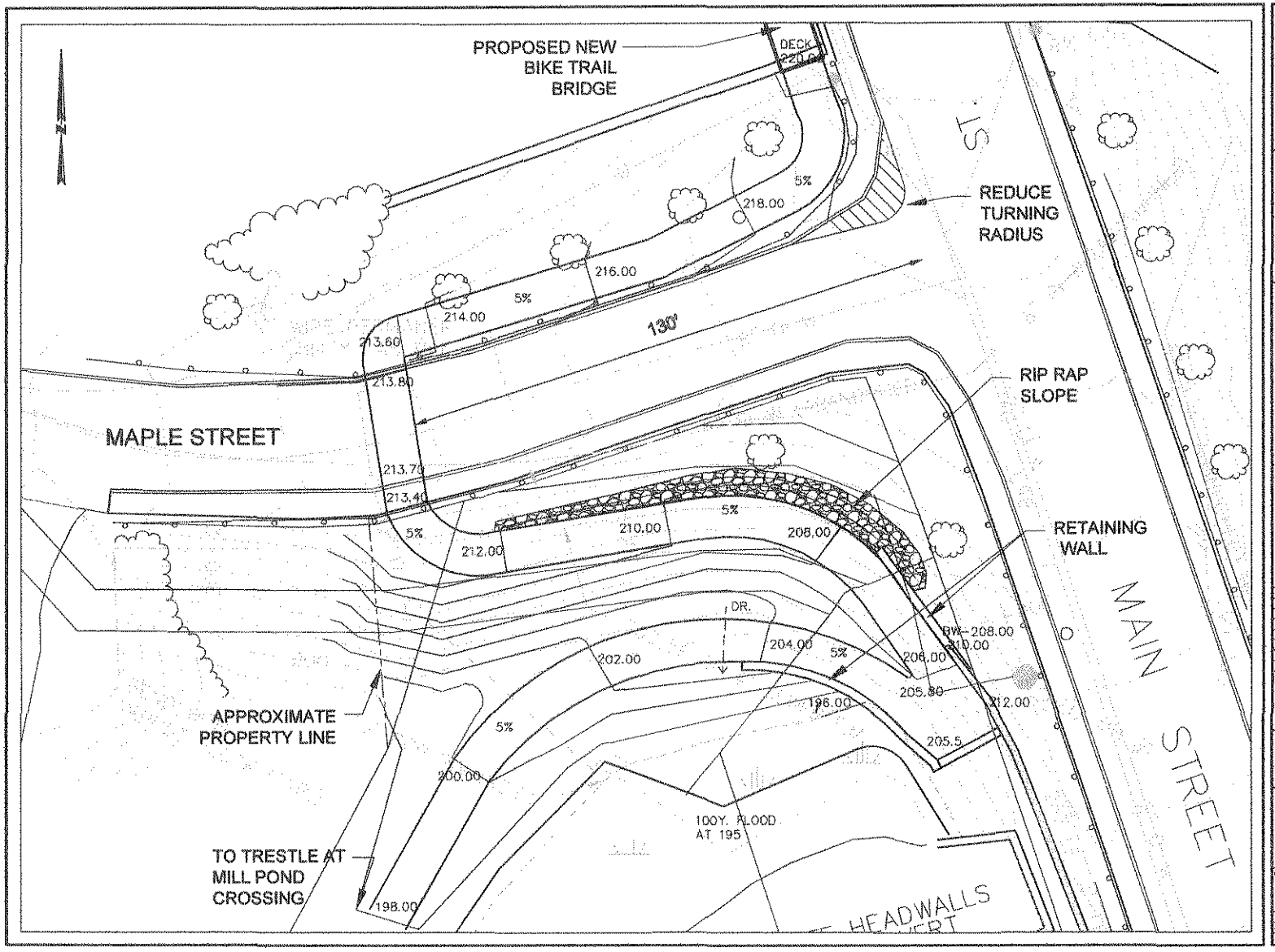
- This option would require the construction of an access ramp down from the elevated parking lot to allow MBTA access.

- Once the ramp systems exits onto the parking lot, a striped lane would demark a bike lane along the northern edge of the parking lot to the existing path leading to the MBTA station.
- Parking spaces could remain as is, but the 7 parallel spaces would be lost.

North Ramp – Option C
As with A and B, a ramp would be installed from the bridge, along Main Street to blue building. Then a gently curved ramp would lead from the landing down to the parking lot. This ramp would be built partly into the embankment, then free standing, then land on a ramp in the southern edge of the parking lot. This ramp treatment eliminates switchbacks and is at 5% to avoid the need for intermediate landings.

- This option would impact MBTA access to the rail line and the Town would need to work with them to explore other options.
- Once the ramp systems exits onto the parking lot, a striped lane would demark a bike lane along the southern edge of the parking lot to the existing path leading to the MBTA station.
- Parking spaces would be greatly impacted. Only a few spaces would remain, with parallel spaces along the northern edge of the parking lot and the possibility of only a few perpendicular spaces below the free-standing part of the ramp.

At this time, we recommend that these options be considered as the bike trail is designed and more detailed information about topography, land ownership and access issues are explored.



SOUTH RAMP

ROUTE 27 MAIN STREET
IN
ACTON, MA
MASSACHUSETTS

BASE MAP

BASE MATERIALS PROVIDED BY
WOODWARD AND CURRAN
DEDHAM MA 800 446-5518
BASED UPON INFORMATION
FROM WASTEWATER COLLECTION
DRAWING C23

RIGHT OF WAY AND TRACK MAP
FITCHBURG RR CO. 6/30/1914

REVISIONS:

NO.	DATE	DESC.

PREPARED FOR:

BSC TERRASPHERE
33 Waldo Street
Worcester, Massachusetts
01608
617 896 4300

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

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JOB. NO:
SHEET 1

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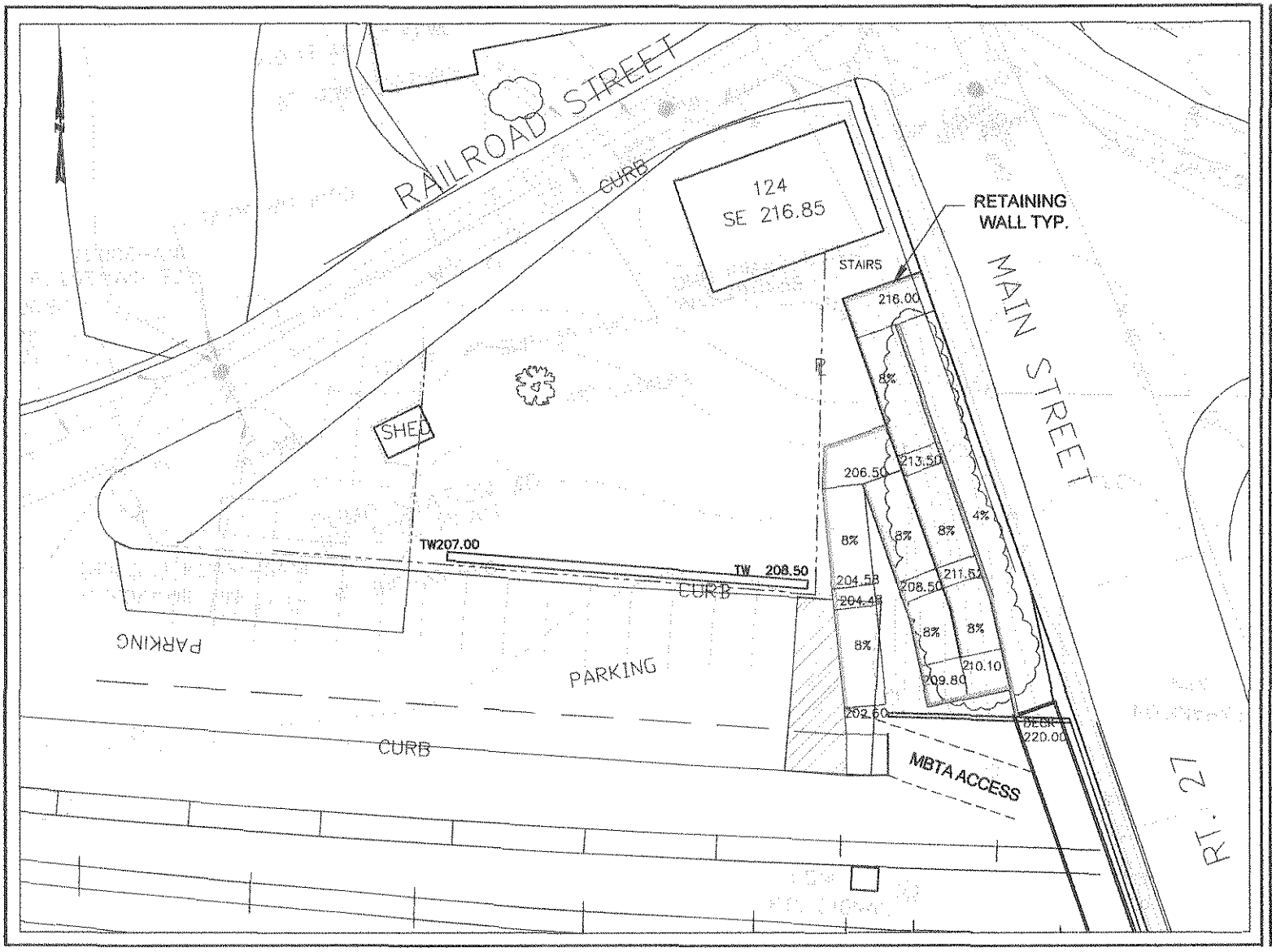

NORTH RAMP
OPTION A

ROUTE 27 MAIN STREET
IN
ACTON, MA
MASSACHUSETTS

BASE MAP

BASE MATERIALS PROVIDED BY
WOODWARD AND CURRAN
DEDHAM MA 800 448-5518
BASED UPON INFORMATION
FROM WASTEWATER COLLECTION
DRAWING C2.5

RIGHT OF WAY AND TRACK MAP
FITCHBURG RR CO. 6/30/1914

REVISIONS:

NO.	DATE	DESC.

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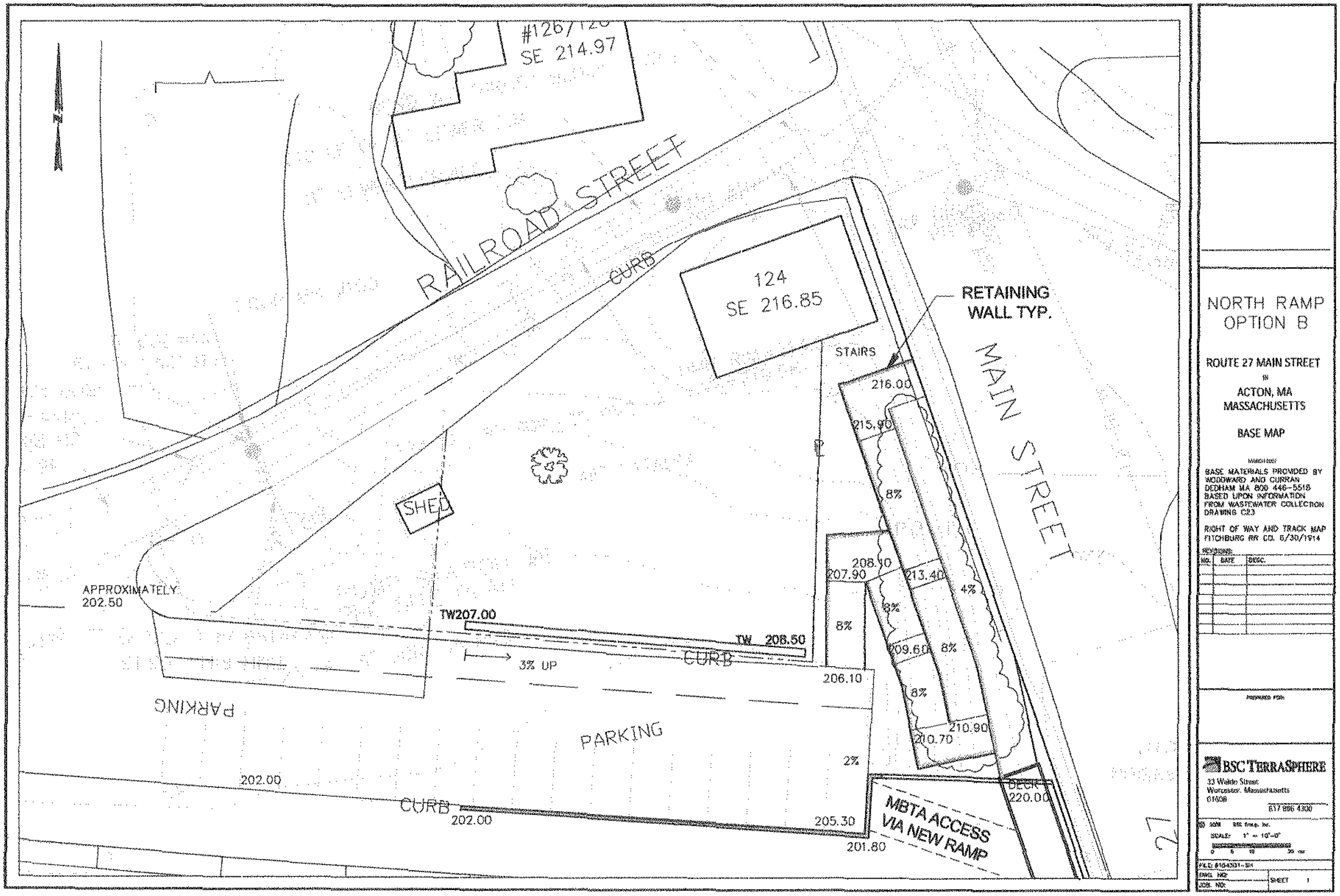

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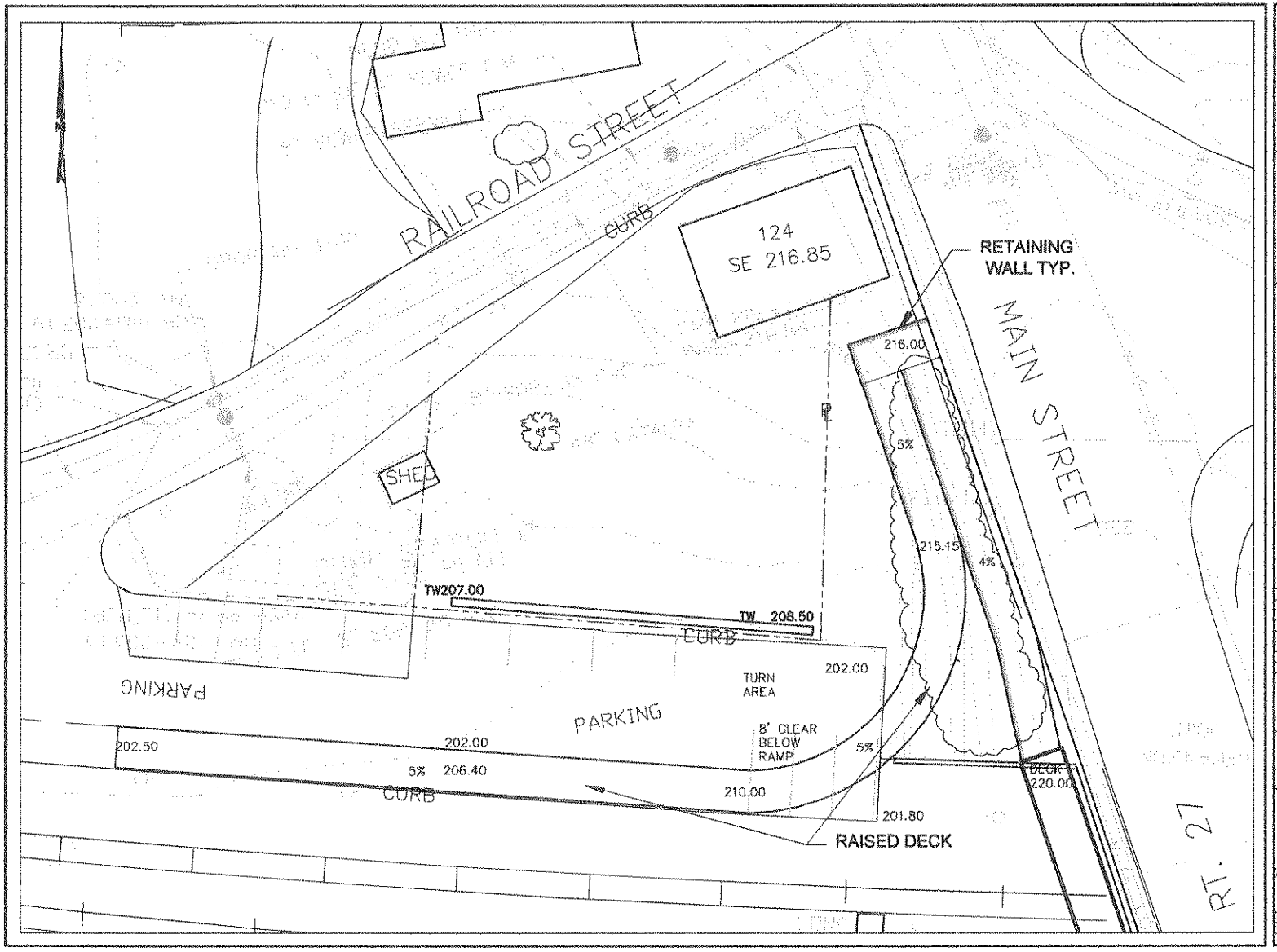

NORTH RAMP
OPTION C

ROUTE 27 MAIN STREET
IN
ACTON, MA
MASSACHUSETTS

BASE MAP

MARCH 2007

BASE MATERIALS PROVIDED BY
WOODWARD AND CURRAN
DEDHAM MA 800 446-5518
BASED UPON INFORMATION
FROM WASTEWATER COLLECTION
DRAWING C23

RIGHT OF WAY AND TRACK MAP
FITCHBURG RR CO. 6/30/1914

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